1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

157 538 593 animals.[1] Other tales with frankly human protagonists portray the same theme,[2] and there are a number of Umbundu adaptations and variations of such European versions of this theme as Cinderella, Snow White, &c. In some tales, such as 'Kalitangi', the hero escaped as an infant from an agreement made by his mother before his birth with another expectant mother that they would both destroy their offspring. Does this indicate a resentment of, or a protest against, child-sacrifice in certain Umbundu rites? I mention this as one possible source for the feeling of neglect and 'rejection' which, however, does not seem to be as acute or as widespread as in our own society.[3] The exact situation could only be determined by careful and extensive investigation.

593 152 [643] Adjustments between siblings among the Ovimbundu on the whole are relatively satisfactory. Resentment on the part of the younger does sometimes occur as indicated above. Overt sibling conflict has also arisen quite frequently in the royal families because of disputes over the succession. Instances of this latter type of conflict may be found in narratives of the early missionaries,[4] in diaries of Silva Porto,[5] and in other early sources. Conflict from jealousy arising out of the parent–child relationship, however, seems to be relatively rare. In a kinship society regulated by the hierarchy of age, jealousy between siblings does not quite fit into the picture. The two most common terms for jealousy over personal relations refer strictly to sexual jealousy: *esepa*, woman's jealousy; and *ukuelume*, jealousy on the part of a man. The other terms are somewhat more applicable but they belong less to household affairs. The meaning of *onya* is jealousy and envy, while *ocipululu* is covetousness and so belongs to the economic sphere.

572 [554] Friendship, especially between age-mates or 'coevals', has played and continues to play an important role in Umbundu social adjustments. Such differences as social station, family, distance of habitation, and even diversity of language and culture are easily bridged by friendship. Many friendships were formed on trading

[1] Cf. *Journal of the American Folk-Lore Society*, 1922, vol. 35, nos. 1 and 18, pp. 116 f., 140 ff.

[2] The tale of *Ñaña la kota liaye* (Baby and his elder sister) referred to *supra*, p. 84.

[3] Investigations of the 'foster-child phantasy', feelings of neglect, 'rejection', &c., reported by Murphy, op. cit., p. 415 f.; and by Allport, op. cit., p. 364 f.

[4] *Missionary Herald*, 1888, p. 242 f.

[5] In *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 1885, 1886.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

expeditions. Many blood-brotherhoods were doubtless undertaken purely from motives of friendship.[1] The *vakuacisoko* is a friendly institution. The Ovimbundu are a friendly people.

Identification is a strikingly important feature of Umbundu social adjustments and of the whole learning process. Children overtly identify themselves with older siblings, with parents, with other older relatives both living and dead, with friends of their parents, with the village headman, or even the king.[2] This perhaps is the process involved in that which the Ovimbundu name reincarnation. It is largely through identification that character appears to run in families. This is why boys are so keen to learn the professions of their fathers or their mother's brothers. Identification with their seniors in social position and economic activity more closely cements the unity of the child–adult sphere and gives the children yet another urge to enter into adult life and assume complete responsibility as quickly as possible.

'Inferiority Conflict' has probably been present in Umbundu life for a long time, perhaps since the rubber trade (1874), perhaps even longer. When a people's activity is keyed to so high a pitch there will be some individuals who find themselves inadequate. There are a number of proverbs which ridicule the stay-at-homes or those 'too lazy' to undertake the exceedingly arduous trading expeditions. European domination has set new paces and created new frustrations, with one result, that 'inferiority conflicts' are probably on the increase. Many individual instances could be cited. A particularly striking one of my observation is of a man whose suffering from epileptic seizures had induced attitudes of inferiority. The conflict was exacerbated by his selection as a hospital assistant, in which position the responsibility required was plainly beyond his ability.[3] Individuals suffering from any physical disability find life difficult among such an aggressive people.

If the disability is great the handicapped individual generally finds the adjustment beyond his powers. I have observed a number of severely crippled individuals brought up in traditional kinship groups, and all of them were suffering from overt inferiority conflicts. All of these individuals had adopted compensatory

[1] Although the rite seems to have connotations of sorcery.

[2] Among the Tallensi, according to Fortes, identification is only with older siblings, with parents, and with 'the clan' (op. cit., pp. 46 ff.).

[3] Epilepsy (*ocinonya*) is considered by the Ovimbundu as a visitation of the spirits and is much feared.

Vakuacisoko (lit. "those of the set")(1)

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Childs considers that the custom of *vacuacisoko* is probably connected with circumcision and initiation. It does not exist throughout the territory but only in certain families who belong to the order and are said to pass it on by heredity. It seems to have been stronger in the past, but few practising members of the set are now known. All 'coevals' or members of the set were in duty bound to render mutual assistance, and all had mutual rights to the property of the others without complaint or remedy. These rights seem to have included that of having intercourse with each other's wives. Injury or even death of one member brought about by another did not allow the injured family to seek revenge or legal redress. It was the duty of the *vacuacisoko* to bury their fellows, themselves digging the grave and attending to all the expenses ordinarily supplied by the family of the deceased. They also had the duty of burying strangers without family who would not be buried by others for fear of defilement or responsibility for their debts.(2) Childs describes the *vacuacisoko* associations as "age-grade sets",(3) but gives no further explanation.

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"With or without initiation rites, adolescence is largely preparation for marriage and full adult life. Traditionally, adolescence is not a time of conflict or stress....Contract and *corvée* labour have brought profound changes, especially for the young men. As for the girls, a few have gone into the towns; relatively few, however, other than those who attend a boarding-school, lead a life essentially different from that which has been traditionally theirs."(4)

MARRIAGE

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Available information concerning degrees of relationship in which marriage is permitted, marriage-payment, polygyny and divorce has been given above.(5) Evambi(6) and Hambly(7) describe some of the customs and ceremonies connected with marriage.

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For three nights after the commencement of the marriage ceremony the girl sleeps with her own parents, while the married woman and six unmarried girls whom she has chosen as her attendants sleep in the house of her husband. On the fourth day she moves to the man's house, bringing her cooking utensils. For the first month, according to Hambly, or, according to Evambi, the first year, i.e. until the grain is ripe in her new fields, she lives with her husband's mother or aunt, in whose kitchen she cooks food each night to send to her husband in the *onjango*. When her first child is two or three months old, a present of a pig passes from the girl's mother to her husband.

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Childs(8) adds that adulthood comes with marriage, and marriage is only recognised as complete when the first child has been born. A child or an adolescent is only a "potential" person *(onunu)* and the permanency

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.115.
(2) Those who buried a man were considered responsible for his debts. Hence corpses were often placed in trees.
(3) Childs, op.cit., p.59.
(4) Ibid., p.117.
(5) Pp.20f.
(6) 1938.
(7) 1934, pp.180f.
(8) Op.cit., pp.119-20.